

## COPING WITH THE COAST

### **A case study of integrated coastal zone planning and management in a North-Norwegian community**

Bjørn K. Sagdahl

Paper presented at the Coastman project meeting  
held June 3-6, 1999 at Lurøy, Helgeland, Norway.



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## Introduction

During the last decades there has been an increased focus on the need for integrated planning and management of the Norwegian coastal zone. While planning of the littoral zone for the densely populated areas along the Oslo-fjord early was initiated and carried through by state guidelines, the more sparsely populated ones at the western and northern coast were subject to traditional sector management and local initiatives. These areas were by and large characterised by key features of a “commons”, although regulations of the resource use gradually were introduced as imbalances and decline came to the fore. Access to the coastal areas and subsistence use of the coastal resources have been regarded an inseparable way of life at the coast. Seen in a historical perspective this traditional access structure has constituted the rationale for habitation and adaptations. Any threat to this coastal “freedom” has been met with protests. The old “Mare Liberum” tradition has been cultural and political deeply rooted, although with limits for activities that could be regarded as threats to traditional adaptations. The open access character of the coastal areas was also traditionally regulated indirectly by a complex informal social structure as well as traditions stemming from medieval law (Ørbech 1998, Sandberg 1993).

But during the last 30 years the coastal communities of the west and the north have lost much of their former flexible way of functioning. State policy, licensing and quota regulations have penetrated former adaptive patterns and turned the local economy to a rather stiff and inflexible system (Seierstad, Sagdahl and Sandberg 1985). The decline of fish stocks and increased international pressure of those remaining is one of the reasons why the former flexibility had to be changed. The international work of making a Convention of the Sea and the establishment of a Norwegian economic zone (EZ) in 1977, extended national jurisdiction and the responsibility for the outer sea areas. The discovery of oil and gas resources at the sea bed some years earlier made these areas targeted for national political control and planning for diversified activities. And in the wake of the expanding oil industry the question of pollution and consequences for sea and land entered the political agenda. While sea and land formerly were regarded as belonging to different arenas, the new industry brought them together as two inseparable parts. The Mare Liberum tradition of the outer sea areas had become history by a rapid transformation to an arena subject for national politics, planning and regulations.

But also the inner sea areas changed its traditional way of functioning during the 1970s, due to the growing aquaculture industry. The need for suitable locations for fish ponds and restrictions for others in these areas, was followed by regulations and public planning. Besides, the industry brought pollution question as well on the local as the national political agenda. And as oil tied sea and shore together for the outer areas, the emerging aquaculture industry had a similar function for the inner sea areas.

Environmental problems that followed from the post-war industrialisation grew also in political importance during the 1970s, being backed by an international environmental movement. The development from the Stockholm meeting in 1972 to the Rio Declaration in the early 1990s led to international obligations that affected every community, also the ones of the coastal areas. And Norway has signed and ratified both the convention of biodiversity as well as the precaution principle of management (Lafferty et al 1997). The rather major transformation of the coastal areas way of functioning as well as of their link to the belonging inner and outer sea areas during some few years, made integrated coastal zone planning and

management an important public challenge. All governing levels of society were affected not at least at the local level being responsible for area planning.

The planning system has been developed also to comprise the local sea waters, although restricted to situations where it is regarded necessary for conflict resolution. The Plan and Building Act was revised both in 1985 and 1989 to open up for municipal (communal) planning for the sea areas. Norway has no littoral law like for instance France, and area planning has to be supported by traditional sector planning and management. That makes area planning dependant on co-ordination to succeed as a managing tool, but this also dispose for conflicts and failures. This paper will focus on coastal planning and management in a small North-Norwegian community, Gildeskaal, in the region of Helgeland in Nordland County. What are the problems of co-ordinated planning, why do they occur and how are they dealt with? What do coastal plans imply for sector management of activities of the zone? These are some of the questions for discussion.

### **The politics of integrated coastal zone management (ICZM)**

Raising problems and finding solutions can never be reduced to technicalities in a world of interests and politics. Although these two types of activities are closely linked, they form separate political processes and the final outcome may turn out to be somewhat twisted as to the problem originally raised. This is an old lesson in political science, and is basic as a starting point to understand management in complex situations. Development and modernity in the western world is characterised by specialisation and complexity. One of the many externalities of this development is the challenge of co-ordination, competition of influence and power in finding workable solutions. Integrated coastal zone management is a highly relevant example in this respect. We are here entering a scene where sector power traditionally has been exerted. And sector power is imbedded in organisational structures, professions and organised clients, reluctant to be challenged by competing perspectives and needs. We are in other words facing institutions in a broad sense, not only one, but many.

Raising problems and defining what is the problem to be followed up turn out to be a rather tough political process to handle. There will be different and contested viewpoints depending on the involved structure of interests and belonging professions. The fishery sector for instance represents traditional use of the resources and sea based areas. It is struggling to keep areas open for traditional fishing as well as for the new and blooming industry of aquaculture. The state fishery agency questions the necessity of local planning for sea areas in general and is protesting to the scope of the planning. Being challenged by environmental interests and international environmental commitments the sector argues that they have a long tradition of sustainable management of coastal and sea based resources and questions the interference by environmental planning and environmental agencies. In a Norwegian context this is the most conspicuous conflict dimension in coastal management at the end of a millennium. Problem definitions as such constitute a political process of its own and is not necessarily clarified in cases put on the political agenda for actions to be taken. Disagreements on what are the problems to be addressed may continue during the entire process, making co-ordination a complex and difficult matter eventually to be handled at the top political level.

Contesting problems are partly a result of the way activities and responsibilities are organised and the attached traditions in the use of perspectives and professions. Competing knowledge is another important trait that complicates managing processes. To reach an agreement on

what are the problems to be addressed and accepted to the political agenda is in itself a political process. The object for discussion is a complex ecological system, and although the knowledge base is expanding it is still insecure and inadequate in many ways. Impacts of human interference as part of the eco-system are not easily spotted or agreed on. It takes time and resources to establish facts, and this process is usually poorly correlated with the development of the problem structure. The principle of precaution as internationally agreed on, is a response to this problem, but not easily converted into practise in a national or local context. What precaution means in practise is still an open question, where all sectors claim to exert scientifically based management, and where objections to established practise is met with the demand of a scientific backing. To reach an agreement on where the precautionary principle should be applied, implies as such a political process if ever raised as an option at all. Science and interests in an institutional frame very often emerge to a degree where it is difficult to tell where science ends and interest politics dominates. In general one can hardly argue that the coastal zone as a whole is scientifically managed in a strict sense of the word. This viewpoint is backed by several studies (Sagdahl 1998)

Planning and management of sea based areas and resources are by that reason disposed for conflicts where solutions may be postponed or negotiated into compromises with little regulative effects and problem solving capacity. Still we may notice a growing concern over the need to act and the impacts of the measures taken. The development of policy making for the zone has speeded up during the 90s. The international society has negotiated agreements and policy commitments for the national authorities to follow up. Thus we find a situation where policy development is not only a response to the problems how they are regionally or locally defined, but also partly a response to international policy obligations propelled by national authorities. These two streams of policy making efforts meet at different governing levels, divided in sectors, working for problems definitions and solutions. Integrated coastal zone management is thus more an idea of a future objective, than a political realistic outcome. A co-ordinated policy seem to be a more plausible objective, and even that may be hard to establish. Planning is a way to reach that objective, and most of this report will be devoted to the process of making a coastal zone plan in the local district of Gildeskaal.

## **Planning, levels and co-ordination**

Area planning is a responsibility for the local authorities according to the Planning and Building Act (PBA) of 1985. The municipality/local district or *commune* as denoted in Norway, is the lowest level in the governing hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> It is run by an elected council and administered by a staff of civil servants, varying in size and planning capacity. Especially smaller local districts, frequently found at the coast, have scarce administrative and planning resources. Local government has been subject to change and growth in political-administrative importance for most of the post-war period. Transfer of state authority and governing tasks to the municipalities and local districts can be noted for a number of governing sectors. Planning for the sea areas of the local district is not a necessity according to the law, but the local authorities are advised to take on planning when felt needed. Especially the development of fish farming has called for area planning at sea. In Nordland we find that such planning took place in the pioneering districts of fish farming before the superior levels of government had initiated a policy for sea based planning (Sagdahl and Sandberg 1999).

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<sup>1</sup> In the following these concepts will be used as synonymies, all denoting the local level of government.

But local government is also found at the county level with responsibilities for co-ordination and development. The introduction of direct election and taxation to the County Council in 1975 led to a substantial growth of the county level of local government, in tasks and in administrative staff. From then on a county civil service was established. The county administration takes care of planning tasks at the county level, acts as a supervisor for planning and organisational development of the municipalities of the county, besides having administrative tasks according to laws and statutes. County coastal planning is such a task and Nordland County came up with a coastal plan in 1998 as the first county plan in Northern Norway. Planning at this level serves in theory the function of co-ordination of municipal plans or as guidelines for planning at the municipal level. But the county has no authority to approve the municipal plans.

As earlier mentioned, Norway has no littoral law as in the case of some other European countries. That opens up for sector management of the coastal areas, conflicts over competence and co-ordination of policy making and planning. While centralised sector management is well established and performing defined tasks by the statutes of law, the co-ordination among sectors has a considerably weaker legal position. It has to be taken care of by the sector authority itself, eventually at the national level by the ministries and the government. That makes co-ordination partly a process of law based administration and partly a process of influence by hearings, negotiations and compromises. While for instance transportation at the coast and the fishing activities are traditional sector administrative matters, planning and environmental matters are sector-crossing tasks that easily challenge the authority of established sector management. The Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Development is the one responsible for area planning and environmental matters in a broad sense of the term. That makes the ministry one of co-ordination in a wide range of matters concerning tasks of sector management defined by law and practise. And the coastal zone is rather heavily influenced by a sector based authority division. Of those, the fishery sector should be especially mentioned.

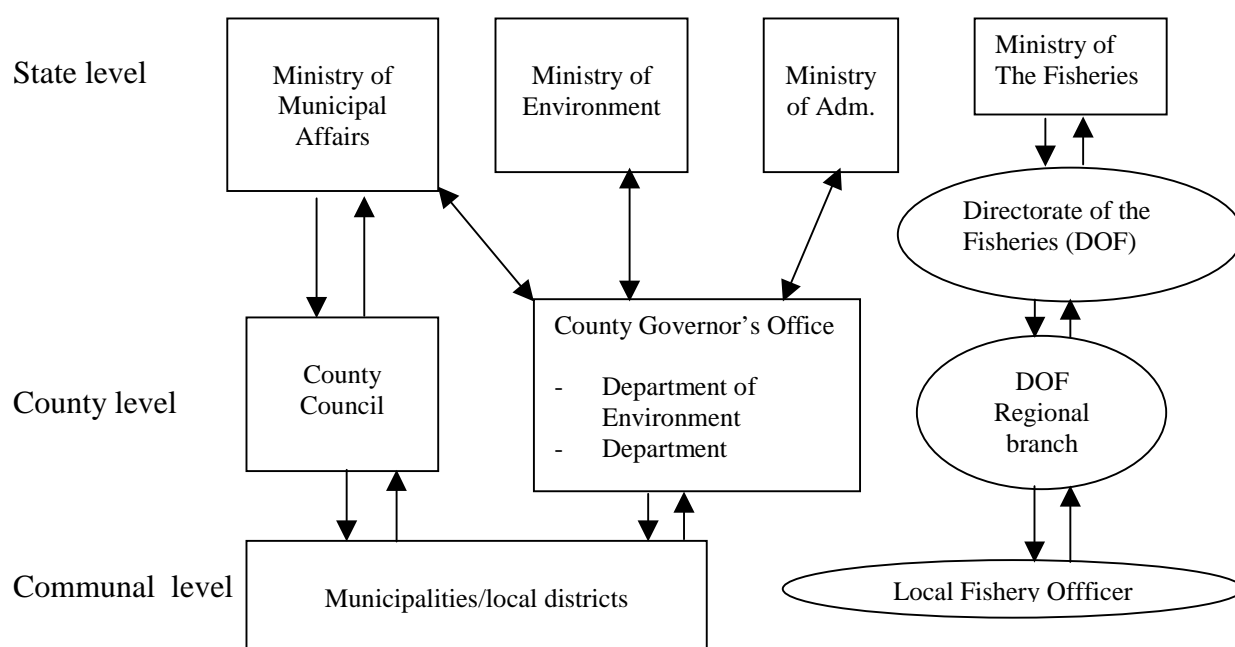
Traditional use of the sea based areas and its resources compared to environmental concerns seems to constitute the greatest co-ordinating challenge of the zone in Northern Norway. Both the Ministry of the Fisheries as well as the Ministry of Environmental Affairs are represented at the county level. While the fishery sector is represented by an agency of its own (The Chief Executive Fishery Officer), placed under the Directorate of the Fisheries, planning and environmental matters are just branches of the State County Governor's Office, an office that handles state government duties for several sectors at the county level. While the position of the state governor's office was supposed to be reduced in staff and governing importance with the establishment of the new county council in 1975, a rather contrary development seems to have taken place. As an example of the many reasons why, one could mention the growing importance of environmental policy in a broad sense of the word since the early 1970s. Nature parks and protected areas of various categories, endangered species, game and wild salmon belong to the tasks taken care of by this office. The Rio Declaration of 1992 and the national responsibilities undertaken by the later ratification has in addition strengthened its governing position at the regional level.

Although local government has a strong position in Norway, established as early as 1836, state government seems to have flourished in the field of the new environmental tasks, undertaken under the influence of the international community and treaties. This could also be noticed as to area planning and confined rights to plan out of local priorities. Local sea based

resources are still regarded as state matters to decide on, leaving little space for local opinions to influence on the policy formation. In general it could be argued that most “commons”- like resources are managed by the state, some time as co-management with affected parties or under the auspices of the state. Growing tensions and conflicts over the superior ruling of local resources has led to more focus on the need to decentralise and co-operate locally. The post Rio agendas, the Regional Agenda 21 and the Local Agenda 21, are both advocating such a development. Future policy seems to follow this line of development in the field of green policy and management. But it is still balanced to the need of action to be taken by state government to implement national standards and international obligations. Besides, the traditional management structures prevail as in the case of the fisheries and sea based natural resources. Local democracy is therefore somewhat limited and underdeveloped as to local influence on policy and management of the variety of areas and resources found within the borders of the local district. Especially “fjord and coast management” is a state sector responsibility, not open for local democracy to influence.

State sector administration is thus represented at the local level and has still a strong position. The fishery sector is represented by an office of its own, being directly subordinated to the county branch of the Directorate of the Fisheries, while environmental questions and area planning are integrated in local government. The administrative structure is thus characterised both by vertical sector governing structures and “vertical sector tasks” integrated in state management at the county level and in local government. The local district is therefore often said to be a battle field of sector interests as sea based planning is concerned (Sandersen 1998).

Fig. 1 Basic structure of the Norwegian governing levels and actors in coastal planning and management



If a “commune” takes on the troublesome task of planning for the sea areas, the process will easily bring in the sector interests as entitled actors in public hearings. The rather complex landscape of sectors and laws, directly or indirectly affected by the planning process, represent a challenge for a poorly staffed local civil service. To facilitate the process of overlooking the



“landscape”, an information handbook (T-4/96) has been elaborated, giving information and interpretations of laws and prescription affected by the process. The fact that the ministry responsible for the planning process has published it together with the one for fishing, reflects somewhat the potential for conflicts with the established sector administration and the need for co-ordination. It is underlined in the handbook that the planning entity does not have to plan for all of its sea territory, but just for that part where area conflicts may arise and especially in matters where shore based and sea based activities are linked. In this matter the Planning and Building Act (PBA) challenge the traditional domain of the Salt Water Fishing Act, quite vigorously defended by the fishery sector and the belonging public agency. And as fish farming is placed administratively under the same agency, the potential for conflicts with environmental concerns and local priorities arise.

The PBA applies in sea for the areas stretching out to the basic line from the outer tip of shore to four nautical miles. This is the general rule, but the state is entitled by law to shorten the distance when special needs are present. So far, this opportunity has not been used. The law is designed to have a co-ordinating function among the managing levels and lay the foundation for use and protection of local resources and building activities in general. The law prescribes detailed prescriptions for planning as an administrative and political process. The right to be heard for affected parties is besides generally law-based by the Public Management Act. If protests made are not taken into account by the planning entity, the protests in some cases may be brought up to the ministerial level. The process is also confined by superior state policy guidelines or plans for special concerns. And if state guidelines exists and apply for the area, as in the case of parts of the Oslofjord and for watercourses with anadrome species, that has to be fitted into the local plan.

The PBA contains also paragraphs to prohibit constructions closer to sea than 100 metres with some exceptions. In general it gives the planning entity wide possibilities to plan in its sea belt out of the judgement of its own. The coastal zone plan is a part of the general local district or municipal plan (communal plan), containing both a long-termed plan and a short-termed one. The area plan part of it belongs to the long termed one, where recreational areas, nature protection areas, fishing activity, fishing grounds, spawning and nursery areas for special concerns may be mapped. Other concerns are public traffic linked to the sea belt and various kinds of constructions. The plan is supposed to give superior instructions for regulations and resource management in the area, as a judicial binding document when formally accepted. The existence of a formal accepted plan enhances the local governing capacity and influence also in state sector matters.

But the road to acceptance is filled with obstacles as neighbouring communes, the county commune or affected state agencies may make formal protests to the planning document. The option is then to accept the protest and follow it up in the plan. Otherwise the standing procedure is that The County Governor then will summit a meeting for formal negotiating purposes. If no agreement is made, the governor will recommend solutions and pass it over to the Ministry of Environment for a final decision, making it eventually subject for inter-ministerial negotiations and considerations. The fishery sector as generally the most affected party may in this way hamper the planning process, modify the ambitions and its efficiency as a planning document by such protests, bringing the plan to the government level for final decision if not successful at the communal level. Besides, the fishery sector questions the right to comply with the legally decided planning documents for the sea areas in cases where they have conflicting interests and judgements. This is especially the case when there are

environmental concerns followed up by environmental agencies by the Nature Protection Act (NPA). That leaves the potential for conflicts rather open and a more strict co-ordinated state policy is still lacking.<sup>2</sup>

If such protests do not occur, the local council has the final decisional power. This transforms the plan into a legal document with supposed implications for activities within its communal borders. In such cases the final outcome is a result of a rather profound negotiating process, where affected parties have had a legal right to take part. Besides, the law abides state sector agencies to join the process to see to it that sector considerations and regional concerns have been taken into account. Both the county government and the State County Governor has as such a special responsibility according to the law to see to it that co-ordination takes place as intended.

Of other governing matters operated by the act of law by state agencies that may intervene with the planning process and call for special considerations to be taken, are the following laws besides of the formerly mentioned Salt Water Fishing Act: The Harbour Act (1984) with the corresponding Coastal Directorate and partly delegated to the municipal level, the Aquaculture Act (1985) operated by the Directorate of the Fisheries, a law that is poorly linked to the PBA and not legally tied up to the decided plan, the Continental Shelf Act (1963) concerning tare and sea grass run by the fishery directorate and grovel and shell sand concerns run by the county government, the Act of Outdoor Life (1957) operated by the state environmental agency at the county level, the Nature Protection Act (1970), the National Heritage Act (1978), the Game Act (1981), the Salmon and Freshwater Fish Act (1992) and the Pollution Act (1981), all operated by the environmental sector at the county level, as well as the Aqua Organism Disease Act (1990) run by the agriculture sector and the Sea Route Act (1993) run by the shipping sector of government.

In this rather twisted landscape of sector interests, we see that the environmental agencies under the Ministry of Environmental Affairs may have the possibility for rather comprehensive internal co-ordination. But protests from other sector agencies and governing responsibilities for such agencies out of sector laws may form severe co-ordinating challenges in coastal zone planning. Of these the fishery sector has turned out to be the most restrictive and least co-operative one.

## **The Local District of Gildeskaal and sea planning**

The coastal zone plan of the municipality Gildeskaal was presented to the local council for decision early spring 1998. The planning process had taken about 4 years, a rather long period for a not too ambitious planning document. Parts of the plan concerning the island of Fugløyvær and the outer sea areas, were not approved by state sector agencies and became subject for appeal to the Ministry of Environmental Affairs. Before turning to the planning and decisional processes we shall make a short description of the municipality and the activities and items in focus for the planning process.

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<sup>2</sup> Two coastal park plans has so far been elaborated and they both has led to heavy political processes at all governing levels, ending in a governmental white paper (St. meld. no. 43 1998-99) for further policy development.



The population of Gildeskaal is living at the coast and consisted in 1997 of 2.456 registered inhabitants. An increasing part of the population has over time moved to the mainland, and especially to the area of the community centre Inndyr with about 900 persons of the present population. A centralisation process has thus taken place, a common feature to most of the Norwegian municipalities and local districts. There has also been a decrease of population, but during the 1990s this process seem to have stopped. But recent prognoses indicate a further decline of the number of local inhabitants.

The industrial pattern of the municipality is rather differentiated. The service sector is the biggest one (61,8%), followed by manufacturing industry constituting 16,7%, while the primary industry of agriculture, fish-farming and fisheries still makes up for 16,7%. The fishery sector has been reduced to 7% consisting of 130 registered fishing vessels, mostly smaller ones, but not all of them are operative. There is a total of 111 registered fishermen, of those 45 with fishing as their only occupation. The traditional fishing sector is still important for those living at the isles and the more sparsely populated areas. Its relative share is the double of the corresponding one at the county level. The value of landed fish in 1997 was estimated to be about 8,5 mill. NKR , but a rather great part was also landed outside the local district. Just two landing stations for fish remain in the local district, both located to isles, while there earlier used to be several receiving stations. The biggest one is run in combination with salmon slaughtering, cooling and freezing opportunities.

The aquaculture industry has since the late 1980s grown to an important part of the local economy with substantial political backing from the Local Council and the local civil service. Raised salmon and connected services were estimated to give a gross profit of 119 mill. NKR in 1997. And the three aquaculture plants gave work to 30 persons and were regarded essential to diverted activities in the municipality. One of the fish farms, the biggest one, is owned by the world wide operating Norsk Hydro. The second biggest one is only temporarily licensed to produce, being a development and research centre. Besides the jobs at the fish farms, there are 19 persons working with salmon slaughtering at one of the isles. Salmon farming and diverted industry are therefor important to the economy of the municipality. But the former experience of salmon farming had shown the industry's vulnerability being exposed to diseases and market fluctuations. The lessons learnt was to have ample access to localities with deeper water and to change locality after production of a cohort of salmon.

About 30 licences for farming of other marine species have been granted. Of those, just two for shell production have been exploited. But there is a growing interest for alternative farmed species, especially for farmed halibut. What kind of criteria should be used to locate such farms are still in the dark. Both aquaculture and the fisheries are regulated by specific laws, managed by the state sector agency, The Chief Executive Fishery Officer, a branch of the Directorate of the Fisheries at the county level.

Traditional fishing and the growing aquaculture industry are therefor of great importance to the local economy. Its marine dependence is also underlined by the location of a "Marine Knowledge Centre" and a planned future vocational education centre of aquaculture technology at the secondary level. The need for planning of the "communal waters" follows from this marine dependence. The spatial needs for suitable locations for fish ponds compete to some degree with the need of the fishermen to have access to traditional fishing grounds. During the previous years a growing conflict had developed. Diseases in fish farming and the fear for a spread to wild fish sharpened the situation. The locations of fish ponds with

restrictions on activities in the near-by waters as well as pollution in such areas also collide with the interests of those spending leisure time in the area and with environmental interests in general. Despite the huge sea areas within the borders of the municipality, which apparently should give ample room for diversified activities, there had been a growing competition of access to sea areas at the isles and along the shoreline of the mainland.

Beside of farmed salmon there are five watercourses in Gildeskaal with wild anadrome species like salmon, sea trout and arctic char. Especially two rivers are regarded important for salmon fishing. But the coastline of Gildeskaal is also a passing through area for salmon stocks for rivers in the neighbouring districts along the Saltfjord. Some of them are well known and important salmon rivers as Saltdal River and Beiarn River. The Norwegian wild salmon stocks have had a steady decline for a number of years and is regarded to be vulnerable from the influence of a number of reasons, among them escaped farmed salmon and salmon lice that develop in and around the ponds. A governmental committee has recently launched a plan to improve the environment for wild salmon, focusing on various factors that might have contributed to the decline of the stocks. About 50 rivers with salmon stocks are by now depleted and most of the remaining ones are regarded to be in danger. The committee has therefore suggested that some rivers and fjords should be given extra protection as “national salmon fjords and rivers” as for instance the Saltdal River. Outlining a national policy to enhance the wild salmon stocks will lead to severe conflicts with the aquaculture industry dependent of access to sea areas of importance for wild salmon. And Gildeskaal as a municipality with dependency of farmed salmon will have to balance such considerations. Management of wild salmon is a matter for the environmental agency at the County Governor’s Office at the county level according to law, but it allows co-management with river owners and delegation of tasks to the municipal level.

The coastal areas of Gildeskaal has become popular for leisure activities. People with family roots in the area as well as others have bought or built cabins. The number of these cabins almost outnumber the permanent houses in the district. While there in 1999 are 1100 houses, 1001 cabins are registered and about 440 additional lots have been planned. The steady increase of cabins, leisure boating and fishing has also by that reason made coastal planning important to the local authorities. The numerous isles and rugged landscape makes the area attractive for leisure purposes by people living in the neighbouring communities, especially from the nearby city of Bodø. The increased pressure on the coastline is not without problems for the municipal authorities as it affects area planning for alternative purposes as salmon ponds. While the use of the coastal areas for outdoor life is supported and followed up as an objective in the coastal plan, the pressure on the coastline for building cabins and boat shelters are regarded to constitute a problem.

Tourism by sea and land has also been increasing. The municipality has an established tourist business known as “Salmon Islands”, where visitors can stay and fish farmed salmon from an enclosed basin of water. Other tourist businesses related to sea activities can also be found, some located to the bigger isles. The sea route along the coast runs through the area and thereby casual visits from the leisure boats that are passing through may be found. Upgrading and development of tourist facilities have therefore been on the local public agenda, and is noted as an objective to be handled by coastal planning. Further development of guest harbours is mentioned in the plan as an actual task as well as upgrading of the harbours in general.

By statute of law all remains of cultural heritage older than 1537 and shipwreck older than 100 years are automatically protected. The coastal landscape of Gildeskaal is rich in cultural heritage remains. Some of the isles were used in the past for visiting fishermen where cabins had been built for that purpose. Special shelters for eider ducks being important for egg and eider in the past, is also regarded important to preserve. The old tradition of outdoor sheep-keeping throughout the year due to the rather mild winter climate, is also mentioned as an objective for taking care of. Preservations of buildings and culture landscape that previously have been neglected in most coastal communities, has thus also become an objective in the coastal plan.

Some of the marine areas of Gildeskaal are registered as suggested nature protection areas according to the Nature Protection Act. The responsible agency to suggest such parks is the environmental department of the State County Governor's Office of the county of Nordland. Some of the isles are habitats for various kinds of sea birds, while other areas are important out of botanical reasons or as culture landscapes. Four locations of the coastal area have been proposed given a protective status in a recent Nature Protection Plan. Objections to parts of this proposals have been made by the local authorities, seeking a modified protection status opening up for fishing and aquaculture in these areas. Thus the traditional conflict between nature conservation and local use of natural resources and areas has developed to become a major problem in the planning process. And this conflict has made the coastal plan subject for review and approval at the Ministry of Environmental Affairs. The plan has so far not been approved and implemented.

The coastal plan comprised all of the above mentioned concerns, even though not all of them were given equally attention. The plan contained both an area map plan, judicial binding when formally decided on, a belonging thematic map as well as a general programme for future development. It was organised with policy directions for the following activities and concerns; fishing, aquaculture, leisure areas, nature protection areas, tourism, cabins and boat shelters, anadrome species, culture protection, sea traffic routes and harbours and exploitation of tare, sea grass, sand and gravel.

## **Superior planning, co-ordination and conflict?**

The planning process of a coastal zone plan for the local district of Gildeskaal was initiated by the Helgeland- project, a pilot project for coastal planning, that started up in 1993. This project was a part of a wider EU-sponsored demonstration programme on integrated coastal zone management and planning, working out experience and methods for coastal zone planning. The programme "Better Management of Coastal Resources" was a response to shared problems of a fragmented institutional structure, problems of co-ordination, changes in the fishery sector, environmental challenges calling for improved planning and management. The objective of the programme was to identify and show practical conditions that had to be met to achieve sustainable development of diversified resources in the European coastal zones. It had a dual function:

- to test co-operation models for the integrated management of the coastal zones and to provide technical results needed to devise the projects to be set up
- to establish structured dialogue between the European institutions and all the players with a stake in the development of the coastal zones.

Most of the EU coastal countries took part in the programme, some with several project cases. The Norwegian pilot project was comprising an area of 18 local districts (communes) in the southern and middle part of Nordland County in Northern Norway, an area known for its many fish farms in a landscape filled with isles and fjords. All of the partaking local districts were closely tied to the sea by coastal fisheries and aquaculture, petroleum related activities and marine businesses and ways of life in general. The aim of the project was to take advantage of local management experience in use and protection of resources in the zone. As the project developed, it revealed disagreements and conflicts among the involved state sector agencies, a conflict that spread to the local level. The environmental sector and the one for fishery and aquaculture were not able to agree and co-operate in a sufficient degree, something that was partly explained by the lack of co-operation at the national level. The importance of consultations among the managing levels and sectors at an early stage in a planning process, was underlined as an important lesson of the project experience. Besides, the importance of participation in the process for the outcomes was also one of lessons learned.<sup>3</sup>

The Gildeskaal coastal plan, finished some years later, could be regarded as a positive result of the Helgeland pilot project. The local civil service profited from the former experience gained and was thus able to better navigate in waters filled with the potential for conflicts. The information brochure “Acts and guidelines for planning and resource use in the coastal zone”, T-4/96, was also available at the time the planning process took place, constituting an important tool for legal and procedural considerations. Besides, some assistance by the governmental white paper on “Regional planning and area policy”, St. meld. nn. 29 1996-97, was available. The Rio Declaration, the convention on bio-diversity, the principle of precaution and the Norwegian ratification and the following up with a Local Agenda as well as a regional Agenda constitute some of the background for planning in the latter part of the 1990s. But in general, the local planning agency was more or less in a situation to learn by doing, although the worst fallacies could be avoided by accumulated experience from the Helgeland project.

Nordland County had at that time also come up with a county coastal plan as a following up of the Helgeland project. The County Council decided in the spring of 1995 that such a plan was to be made and two years later, in April 1997, the plan was ready and decided on. The plan gave comprehensive information of managing means for the variety of resources and activities found in a northern coastal county as Nordland. International treaties and obligations as the convention on biological diversity, the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, state governmental policy documents were referred at, although the international policy documents were treated rather superficially as guiding principles. The plan was anyway rather well anchored in superior governing principles, acts of law and prescriptions for coastal management and planning, giving good advice and information to be followed up if needed. And the County Council decision stated that the plan was an spatial plan and contained regional policy guidelines binding for coastal planning in the county. It was also expressed as an ambition of the plan to assist in conflict resolution during processes of coastal planning in the local districts of the county.

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<sup>3</sup> “Better management of Coastal Resources”, a European programme for integrated coastal zone management. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1997.

But the most important planning document to be considered in the planning process in Gildeskaal, was the “Coastal Conservation Plan” of the county, a planning process that had been going on for a number of years and where the final decision had been postponed due to severe conflicts. The plan was aiming at conservation of evaluated areas along the coastline of the county, and was heavily disputed, bringing restrictions to the local communities in resource use and practise as well as to the fishing industry. By the intervention of local MPs, the plan was brought to political considerations in Parliament, something that led to further policy making by the government. The plan is still under consideration for a final acceptance.

## **Organisation and management of the plan**

The coastal zone planning process started up in 1994, backed by the Helgeland project and formally initiated by a local council decision. Experience from the EU-funded Helgeland pilot project influenced the outcome as well as the use of methods for sampling data and organising the planning process. The decision to participate in the mentioned pilot project was not evident, but the local fishermen unions had been pressing for participation. The unions had some knowledge of the advantages of sea based area planning through their organisational network.

The local council had some years earlier passed a decision on the main objectives for the district. It should constitute a distinct alternative to the tendency of settling down in cities and bigger centres by the strengthening of the district’s comparative advantages. As one of those, the cleanest environment in Europe was mentioned. The coastal zone should be the object for the development of tourism, fish farming and improved processing of the sea based resources. The area planning of the coast and the sea belt was therefore important to the further development of these activities, that were mentioned as the three basic fields to be developed. Multiple use of the sea areas, including access for leisure use, was the main objective. Diversified area use by planning and mapping to prevent future conflicts and to dispose for a sustainable development of its sea belt, were the specific objectives that should be met by the coastal plan.

Contrary to many other poorly administrative staffed local governments, the commune took on the planning process itself and avoided the use of external expertise. A steering committee of the top politicians of the local council was established, a fact that reflects the potential of conflicts that could be evoked by the planning process. One of the lessons early learned by the Helgeland project was that such conflicts easily could arise, especially when dealing with superior sector agencies for the environment and the fisheries.

The planning and the building act as the legal foundation for the planning process gave detailed prescriptions for how to organise the planning process, whom to consult and hear throughout the process. Some assistance was also available at the secretariat for the Helgeland project. A variety of interests and actors had been consulted. Folk meetings in especially affected communities were held to inform about the intentions and planning progress and to solve conflicts. In the process of gathering data for mapping of resources and activities in the specific areas, the local planners had co-operated with the local fishermen unions and the fish farmers. The use of local knowledge in this part of the process, was regarded as essential to make a local plan both for information purposes and for reasons of legitimacy. Following to this registration, a provisional map was made to be subject for comments from affected



parties. The former conflicts between traditional fishing and fish farming had become reduced during the process.

The state fishery sector agency, the agency for environmental concerns as well as the one for fish health in fish farming, were consulted. The conflicting interests between the one for environment and the others were soon revealed and became the greatest challenge to deal with and eventually to overcome. The fishery agency signalled objections to the scope of the planning efforts and wanted no interference on their domain of fishery matters. The outer part of the local waters should remain unplanned and open for the sector agency to decide. Initially, the fishery agency had refused to take part although formally being obliged to co-operate out of statute of law and governmental policy recommendations.

The state agency for environment was at that time in the process of making a coastal protection plan for the county according to the nature protection act. Part of the area at the island “Fugløyvær” was suggested to be protected. This implied local restrictions for the use of the area. Due to local reactions and protests from the state fishery agency the local council decided to join the protest to the area being protected and not available for future fish farming.

Most of the documentation and registration work took place during the first year of the planning process. And during the following year a preliminary draft was presented. A revised version was presented to the steering committee at the turn of 1995 with a follow up in 1996. A meeting with the state fishery agency concerning a protest of the scope of the plan was then summoned. The protest was followed up by the local fishery board, being actively influenced by the agency. The viewpoints of the fishery sector were then discussed in the steering committee before reaching to a conclusion that the whole of the sea areas should be included. During the following year, early in 1997, the plan was subject to a second scrutiny in the steering committee. Formal negotiations with the opposing state agencies were held the same year where some compromises were made, but still some aspects remained contested. In January 1988 the steering committee ended its job and the local district council made the final decision some months later. The plan and the remaining protests were then forwarded to the Ministry of Environmental Affairs for a final approval.

## **Co-ordination and conflict resolution**

Initially some superior planning documents were mentioned as general guidelines for the plan. Some of them were almost obsolete at the time the plan was in the process of being elaborated. As the plan was presented in the spring of 1998, one could have expected that the new and improved version of the state planning guidelines for coastal planning, T-4/96, as well as the revised state white paper on regional planning and area policy were referred to. Contrary we find that the former versions were used. The reason seems to be a local problem of being updated with the state planning process that speeded up in the latter part of the 90s. Neither was there any specific reference to the Rio outcomes as the Convention on biodiversity and the principle of precaution as well as the action plan Agenda 21 for the local and the regional level.

But the latest state white paper on aquaculture (St. meld. no 48 1994-95) was referred to and the newly published county coastal plan, that gave a rather comprehensive overview of relevant documents and acts of law. Evidently, this latter mentioned had not been of much use during the first phase of the process, as the planning processes had taken place more or less

simultaneously. But the main reason seems to be that the planners did not consult the county planning department sufficiently. Neither did they take the trouble to update the plan during the final stage of the planning process, although it was completed almost a year after the county plan.

Judging from the planning document as it turned out, the superior efforts of planning a policy of sustainability and environmental concerns were not directly voiced. The principle of precaution that could be linked to the fish farming as to possible impacts for the environment, especially for anadrome species as wild salmon, were not even mentioned. The watercourses with wild salmon, sea trout and arctic char were listed, but without remarks of any critical considerations but the general rule not to locate fish farms in the inlet of such rivers. But the wild salmon was not only caught in the rivers. Also most of the farmers bordering the coastline were licensed to fish wild salmon with land tied nets. This activity was based on old and established rights and belonged to a great number of the coastal land properties.

Over the years the number had been reduced as the rights had not been activated. Still the local district of Gildeskaal had the highest number of active salmon rights in the region. In 1998, despite strict regulations, we find that 37 persons had registered for salmon net fishing. It is interesting to note that 15 had addresses outside the local district, reflecting the external use of the local resources. Contrary to many other areas with considerable sea based salmon fishing, the stake holders of fishing rights are not organised in Gildeskaal. Individual protests to safeguard fishing rights in areas with planned fish farming were registered. Especially the property owners with salmon rights along the Northfjord, bordering the homing route for the salmon stock of the Beiarn river in the neighbouring local district, were critical to the disposition of the area for fish farming. A meeting was held but gave no substantial change to the planned dispositions, but the dispute led to a postponement of a decision for this area until the plan as a whole was decided on. The area was one of the most important ones for fish farming and several ponds were already located to these waters. Wild salmon was as such a bigger concern than evidently reflected in the planning document, where the land based local wild salmon rights and fishing were let out. It should be noted that the state fishery agency had voiced objections to the concerns for wild salmon in this area, arguing that negative impacts of fish farming for wild salmon were not proven.

What turned out to be a bigger conflict, was the state fishery sector's resistance to planning for all of the local waters and the agency's concerns for the potential locations for fish farming. The agency functioned as a traditional pressure group in this respect. The local fishermen were at first quite in favour of the idea of planning for all the sea area, but the State Chief Executive of the Fisheries and the County Fisherman Union as well, influenced the local fishermen unions to work for a minimum plan. If so, a location of future fish farms outside the planned area would then be a formal matter for the agency to decide. Such an outcome would reduce the tension between local fishermen and the fish farming interests in the planning process and more or less confine it to the locations already disposed by the fish farmers.

The agency did also fear poor regular updating of the plan (according to the PBA) from former experience with municipal planning, thus the plan in this case would prevent future possibilities. But the local council had decided that all of the local sea belt should be subject for planning. As the fisheries still are important for some of the local communities, especially at the islands, one could have expected that spawning and nursery areas for local fish stocks were described and suggested protected from competing and damaging activities. Although

we find some areas mapped for the use of seining and storage of caught fish in the thematic map, they were left out of the plan. Neither was there any information on local fish stocks and special concerns to be taken in this respect. The planning act opens up for mapping of such areas and that special concerns may be taken, but such concerns are disputed by the state fishery agency and represent a judicial “grey zone” in conflict with the Salt Water Fishery Act. It is generally known that local fish stocks exist in the Gildeskaal waters and that former initiatives have been taken to avoid the use of trawling and purse seining in specific sea areas and fjords (Sagdahl 1998). The local fishermen unions and the local council decided some years earlier to work for protection from trawling and purse seiners at four of the local fjords.<sup>4</sup> This was not followed up in the coastal plan where the fisheries were suggested to take place in the suggested areas for “...fishing, transport, nature and leisure areas” without any restrictions in time or in the use of gear types. Any environmental and local fish stock concerns were not expressed, but the plan argued for a more active communal role in developing the fisheries and local exploitation of the resources, giving opportunities for more local jobs for the future.

The main reason for the modest ambitions to protect local fish stocks as well as the local use of these resources, was the attitude and the protests from the state sector agency of the fisheries. The office even opposed the right to map local fish stocks in a local coastal plan. The plan should just be confined to shore based sea areas leaving out fishing activities and facts concerning fish management in conflict with the traditional managing domain of the sector. Besides, the agency had for years turned down applications from local fishermen to safeguard local fish stocks and the local use of such resources by special regulative measures. The sea should be subject for general regulations and not for local ones, was repeatedly stated as the general policy to be followed in such cases (Sagdahl 1998)

Another conflict was the one between the leisure interests, cabin owners of the area and their resistance to near by locations of fish farms and their use of popular fishing and leisure areas. In such cases pollution will occur as well as there will be general restrictions to the area. The local cabin owners, poorly organised, felt that their concerns and protests were not heard. They had no organisation to take care of their interests and speak of their behalf. Besides, there was a rather mixed feeling towards these interests, being mostly ex-locals, using the area for leisure purposes and interfering with the conditions for local business development. As some of them were owners of important properties at the isles, well suited for aquaculture locations, they had to be formally addressed in the planning process. Some of them felt quite neglected as to the planning outcomes. Not only the external cabin owners, but also the local farmers and property owners with an interest in selling lots for leisure cabins. Instead they

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<sup>4</sup> It was argued that local fishermen using small vessels were forced away from important fishing grounds by the bigger ex-local vessels as trawlers and purse seiners. And it was maintained that the trawlers had over-exploited local stocks of fish. The Sør fjord, the Morsdalsfjord, the Holmsundfjord as well as the Beiarfjord I in the neighbouring local district) should then be protected from the use of trawl and seines, “.... As we vigorously will maintain that there are local fish stocks of pollock, cod and herring. The frequently use of seining for these resources ruin the resources and the outcomes for local fishermen. Besides, shrimp trawling ruins the nursery areas and prevent these resources to become mature for ordinary local fishing.” It is interesting to note that the decision of the local council was passed on to the neighbouring local council of Beiarn to be supported before addressing the county state agency of the fisheries. An advisory body of fishermen representatives will then look into the matter, before the fishery agency pass it on to the Directorate of the Fisheries for a final decision. In practise local regulations are hard to come by and have especially been subject for rejection in Nordland County (Sagdahl 1998).

experienced that the planners suggested the adjacent sea based areas for fish farming, something that was believed to be an intended but hidden strategy to prevent future cabins in the area. It should be noted that these interests were not necessarily co-ordinated with those of the planned areas for leisure and tourism in the commune. The spread of the former mentioned properties complicated planning, while the planned areas for future development were easier to fit in. The tourist enterprise “Salmon Island”, that offered accommodation and fishing opportunities of raised salmon, was a part of the planned growth of these activities. And future growth in the leisure industry of the coastal areas was followed up by planning for harbours and facilities for boating and tourism in the area.

A third conflict domain was the one of state planning for protected coastal areas according to the Nature Protection Act. This meant a closure for local industrial use as well as restrictions for general use of the area. The island “Fugløyvær” was well suited for locations of fish farms and the state plan that included a major part of this area was hence heavily disputed. The suggested status of nature protection area implied far more restrictions than the status of areas for leisure purposes where only directly conflicting activities to leisure use were forbidden. Some minor areas were regulated to fill that purpose, a narrow inlet to a fjord as well as a spectacular sandy beach of about two kilometres. The local policy to avoid the protection status for the contested area of “Fugløyvær” was to suggest the status of a “bird protection area” implying less restrictions for general use. The island was earlier designated for nature protection, but the period for this designation was now ended. The commune felt now free to plan as it pleased, although it was at first not objecting to the suggested protection status. The advocate for less restrictions was the state agency of the fisheries that also had objected to this part of the plan. During the formal negotiation that was held at the County Governor’s Office in August 1997, the communal negotiators chose to agree and change the status of the area to a combination of a nature and aqua-culture area. Both the mayor and heads of the relevant departments of the civil service were present. The local council followed up by recommending that fishing and aqua-culture could take place in this area and that the suggested prescriptions in the coastal protection plan should be changed. The further result was then a protest from the environmental department of the County Governor’s Office, being responsible for planning for nature conservation.

But although the local district council of Gildeskaal reached an agreement with the fishery sector in the use of the suggested protected area, it did not approve to the protests from the agency that the outer sea areas of the commune should not be subject for planning. The councillors preferred that all of the “commune’s sea territory” should belong to the plan. And they followed up the compromise of not accepting the restrictions to the island of “Fugløyvær”, suggested by the state environmental sector agency. Besides these two unsettled questions, the rest of the plan became working with the unanimous council decision. And the corresponding mapped area dispositions became hence judicial binding for further use of the areas. Due to the protests from the state agencies the contested areas are subject for formal consideration at the Ministry of Environmental Affairs, according to the statute of law. The case was channelled through the County Governor’s Office, commenting that fish farming in the contested area of “Fugløyvær” could not legally be combined with the protection status, with reference to the fact that it also was stated in the county coastal plan. The county state agency for the fisheries had objected to the necessity to include sea areas in a case where birds and land habitats were the primary target for protection. The sea of the area should therefore be open for future locations of fish farming and traditional use, a conclusion that later became shared by the local council. The environmental department could not accept this solution, but

was willing to partly accept the local councils objections by reducing the suggested restrictions on fishing in the area. The County Governor followed up by suggesting that the somewhat reduced protest from the environmental department should be accepted by the ministry.<sup>5</sup>

The other objection from the state fishery agency was the scope of the plan, that the commune had planned for all of the “communal sea area” and in a way prevented locations of future fish farming in that part of the sea belt. In practise this meant also a restriction to the state fishery sector to decide on future locations of ponds in this area. The basic motivation for the planners was to prevent future conflicts between the fish farmers and the local fishery sector. That’s why they had chosen to plan for the whole area. This motivation was supported by the County Governor who advised that the protests from the state fishery agency should be dismissed by the ministry.

A final outcome for these areas has not been made at the end of 1999 and the future use of the contested areas is still unsettled. The rest of the plan became judicial binding with the decision of the local council the 12.03.98.

## **Wild salmon and salmon rivers**

As a whole, the coastal plan of Gildeskaal seems to favour the fish farmers and their need for locations. This is reflected in the rather detailed information given in the plan and the belonging area maps. And the state agency for the fisheries and fish farming characterised the plan as outstanding for fish farming purposes. Major parts of the coastal areas of the commune had been opened up for fish farming. The reason why is that this industry is important for the local economy and that there is a potential for further growth and development. By judicial reasons all kind of aqua-cultures were included, but in practise most of the locations were meant for ordinary fish farming of salmon and sea trout.

But the planners have also taken care to balance the interests of local fishing, that in some respects are in conflict with fish farming and the corresponding area restrictions on fishing. By planning for the whole of the sea areas and making reservation of the outer sea areas mainly for fishing, the plan also documents the concerns given to the traditional sector of the fisheries. The protest from the state fishery agency was disregarded in this respect. The general policy that could be read out of the plan is that the local areas and resources should not be subject to restrictions that limit traditional use and exploitation. This internal balance was difficult to be reached, but the external pressure from the affected state agencies made the compromise even more difficult. It seems that poorly organised interests which were not backed by state sector administration, were more easily disregarded. The individual protests from the cabin and land property owners exemplify that fact. Also the spokesmen for the wild salmon interests in the area had problems of being noticed.

Planning is a political remedy to prevent conflicting use and to guide further development of the activities covered by the plan. In the case of wild salmon such conflicts are not so easily seen. Although the consequences of salmon farms for the wild salmon stocks are generally well documented, this conflict seem to have been more or less avoided in the planning process. Aspects as fish diseases, escapes, sea lice, genetic pollution and competition with

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<sup>5</sup> According to the letter from the County Governor’s Office of 03.02.99 to the Ministry of Environment.

escaped salmon in the rivers for habitats and spawning grounds were not mentioned. In areas with a considerable amount of fish farms, there has been a significant decline of wild salmon stocks. A recent report has documented such challenges in the management of wild Atlantic Salmon at the coast of Norway (NOU 1999:9) The coastal plan of Gildeskaal avoided such problems and confined the concerns for wild salmon to comply with the Salmon Act's prescriptions not to dispose for locations of fish farms near by to the inlet of salmon rivers. Of the five rivers with stocks of anadrome species mentioned in the plan, none were regarded to be vulnerable for the local pressure from the sea farms. Contrary, locations for ponds were planned close to two of the rivers. Nevertheless, the objective of the plan was in this regard formulated to safeguard and enhance the local anadrome stocks "... in correspondence with the objectives of the Salmon Act". Of measures to be taken to reach these objectives, it was left in the dark by the formulation "... to identify and make a priority of relevant measures to safeguard and develop watercourses with anadrome species." The plan could hardly be denoted to fill this purpose if recent knowledge on externalities of fish farming should be taken into account.

Local anglers and river owners were sceptical to possible negative impacts of the local fish farms. The plan had also stated that outdoor life is regarded to be essential to the local welfare. But the general decisional climate of the council did not favour such concerns. The local fish farming industry gives a major contribution to the local economy. But it should be noted that the fish farmers were not able to get all of the locations of ponds asked for. The locations of fish ponds and eventual impacts for the salmon rivers had also been discussed with the state environmental officers, evidently contributing to the final outcome of reducing the size and locations for fish farming. The final plan had fewer locations than the thematic map had suggested as possible ones.

Another important aspect is that the local waters of Gildeskaal forms the gateway to the Beiarfjord of the neighbouring local district of Beiarn. The Beiarn River is known for its salmon stocks, big sea trout as well as Arctic char, being ranked as the third most important salmon river of the county. The coastal plan of Gildeskaal disregarded in practise any concerns for this river. It was not even mentioned although some fish ponds are located almost in the very inlet of the fjord. And the plan opened up for a major growth of fish farming at both sides of the narrow passage close to the fjord inlet. These waters are also known to be important for the sustainability of the sea trout stocks of the region as feeding and nursing areas. The local government of Beiarn, although entitled to by act of law, did not make a formal protest to the plan. Neither did the environmental department of the County Governor's Office, the responsible agency for salmon management of the area. But the same department was also responsible for the coastal nature conservation plan and did only a formal protest concerning the island "Fugløyvær". Probably for tactical reasons and from former experience. The state fishery agency is generally known not to accept a negative link between fish farming and decline of salmon stocks and would immediately have made a formal protest to an area closure for fish farms based on such concerns.<sup>6</sup> There are examples that local planners have argued for area disposition based on leisure concerns to safeguard a local salmon stock. Besides, the lesson learnt by the environmental department from former

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<sup>6</sup> The lacking concerns for wild salmon reflects partly a traditional domain conflict in national government. The Ministry of the Fisheries has questioned the logic of wild salmon being an administrative matter for the Ministry of Environmental Affairs as well as the former solution of making it a responsibility for the Ministry of Agriculture.

experience was that one should not invite to conflict in all cases, but save such situations concerning the most important salmon rivers.<sup>7</sup>

### **Assessment of the plan as a managing tool**

The coastal plan could be characterised as a response to the pressing problems of locations for fish farming in the district of Gildeskaal. This industry is regarded to be important for further local growth and development. Area planning to avoid future conflicts with the traditional fishing sector was by that reason preferred. Besides, the possibilities for further growth in tourism and to pave the way for a more managed development of cabins and use of the areas for recreational needs, were also working motivations. By and large it may be regarded as a positive working tool for the local council as an answer to the problems how they were felt and perceived.

Contrary to this practical approach, a more environmental perspective would probably have changed the outcomes. In the wake of the Rio conference and the environmental obligations that followed, brought down to the local level by Agenda 21, one could have expected the ecological dimension to be more distinct in a plan finished as late as 1998. Any reference to these obligations were missing. In that case the local ecology would have had to be described and discussed as the very foundation for the planning efforts. That includes also the variety of resource use as an important part of the local ecology. Neither was the link between wild life and consequences from the planned area use discussed. Not even seals and sea otters as predators to salmon and trout of the area were mentioned although these wild animals constitute a permanent threat to the ponds and farmed salmon. To diminish local stocks of seals has generally been regarded important both out of considerations for fish farming as well as for the sustainability of wild anadrome species.

But although the motivation for planning was modest and functional primarily to solve and prevent future area conflicts, the process as discussed represented a considerable challenge to carry through. And despite the openings for extensive fish farming, it was not able to be passed without protests from the state fishery agency. The traditional conflict between environmental concerns and local use of resources and areas, was revealed. As in the case of the Helgeland pilot project, the sector agencies were the combatants. Locally it seemed to be better chances for reaching agreements, but with the interference of the state fishery sector the lines of division became more visible and rigid.

The coastal plan of Gildeskaal is thus a good example of the problems attached to attempts to planning and management of local sea territories, a field of government that formerly had been reserved for state agencies administration and not an object for local government. Even modest governing ambitions as in the case of Gildeskaal, may lead to conflicts in such cases.

Judged from this experience one could argue that the ambitions turned out to be rather ambitious. The problems of an area filled with state sector agencies leaving little room for local manoeuvring, even in questions of area dispositions, reflects the problems of integrated coastal zone management. In this respect the fishery sector seems to constitute the biggest problem as a sector defender arguing for traditional management practise disregarding new standards of environmental concerns. The environmental state sector administration being

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<sup>7</sup> Information given in interviews with the environmental department.

responsible for sector acts with implications for traditional fishery management is by that reason met with suspicion and resistance. It is argued that this sector is devoted to a way of thinking that stems from processes of terrestrial conservation ecology and not suitable for the commons at sea. Besides, the fishery agency consider itself to have a long record of environmental concerns. The cleavage between these two sectors are by that reason profound and lasting, even at the state government level. The protests related to the coastal area protection plan of Nordland as well as the one in the neighbouring county of Troms, illustrate this point. The protests have lead to a recent governmental white paper for policy discussion in Parliament. Being labelled “Protection and use in the coastal zone”, it addresses directly the overriding problems of integrated management (St.meld. no 43 1998-99). While the fishery sector has refused the relevance of the nature conservation act for sea areas, the white paper is stating that it also applies for such areas but that a revision may will be needed to clarify its relevance and relations to the fishery sector.

Coastal sea planning is present by that reason a “mine field” where conflicts may easily arise (Sandersen 1998). Although the Planning and Building Act is aiming at area planning to avoid conflicts, it has implications for sea based activities, even for the fisheries. Local stocks of fish resources exist along the coast, a fact that the administrative structure and practise not yet have adjusted to. Recent research documents that the state fishery agency of Nordland has been reluctant to accept this fact and the necessity of local regulations to maintain these resources in a sustainable way (Sagdahl 1998). The administrative system developed to handle such problems, although inadequate organised, has been neglected by the agency being responsible for its functioning. The lack of valid information of local resources along the coastline, complicates the situation, as local knowledge is rejected as relevant for regulative purposes by the agency. A coastal area plan although modest in governing ambitions as in the case of the Gildeskaal plan, thus becomes easily a rather giant step in this context.

The white paper presented by the Ministry of Environmental Affairs underlines that such coastal protection plans are only relevant for the two counties of Nordland and Troms. No more countywide protection plans are to be made. Such area protection was argued to be essential to maintain the biological diversity it was argued, and it constituted only a rather small proportion of the country’s total area. But use and protection could to some degree be combined and this should be tried out in Nordland County as a test case with an advisory group of representatives from the affected state agencies attached. Fisheries in such areas could then take place, but eventually with restrictions as to the use of gear types. And with the positive development towards more environmental management in fish farming, it was argued that these activities could be combined in the future. But in such cases the principle of precaution should be applied as a governing principle. Also in the process of mapping areas and suggesting sea areas for future protection, it was advised to establish an advisory group of affected interests. And when a protection decision was made, having drawn on local and communal participation, it was also essential to empower local government to handle the implementation process. The government is thus signalling a future decentralisation and more locally anchored management of environment and biological diversity, a policy outcome yet not decided on but in line with local attitudes in general.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The governmental white paper “St. meld. no. 43 1998-99”, presented by the Ministry of the Environment has had a close co-operation with the Ministry of Fisheries in the elaboration process of this policy document. It is still not debated in the Parliament, and could end up somewhat weakened as future political guidelines in the difficult balance of use and protection of coastal resources.



At the turn of the century facing a new millennium a transition in perspectives and acceptance of managing tasks and challenges seems to be taking place. It may be slow, but is still noticeable. The complexity of local ecological systems calls for local commitment and practise if managed in a sustainable way. The need for local knowledge and the need to establish and improve legitimacy of a growing external managerial interference in traditional use of local renewable resources, has led to a search for solutions. Devolution and decentralisation of power to regional and local level and forms of co-management seems to be the general answer. It was first noticed in environmental matters in general, where the Ministry of Environmental Affairs introduced an arrangement with local municipal environmental officers. After a transition period where the state sponsored the wages, the position was eliminated in a number of communes. In Nordland County we find that a majority of these communes were typical coastal communes, communes where local politicians often question the necessity of environmental management and corresponding money spending (Sagdahl 1998). But despite budgetary and staff problems, there is a noticeable tendency to decentralise former state sector tasks, at least to establish co-operating links to local government. We find examples of this development in the field of nature parks and protected areas, in game management and in management of local salmon stocks. And the new state policy document on protection and use of the coastal zone resources, represents a distinct step towards decentralisation and user group participation in the managing processes. Integrated coastal zone management could be an important step to a further environmental management growth, where local government and local influence on the management policy most likely will become more important for the future development.

## **Conclusion**

The planning process of elaborating a coastal zone plan for the local district of Gildeskaal demonstrates a basic finding from the Helgeland demonstration project, that the affected sector authorities are poorly co-ordinated in performing their governing tasks. Local planning for the coast will hence imply formal protests and appeal to superior governing levels as long as agreements are not reached by negotiations. Sufficient compromises at the local level may be found, but not in our case where vital sector interests were confronted.

Another aspect is the question of internal influence in the local planning process. Affected parties like cabin owners, wild salmon fishermen and anglers were neglected. This could be explained partly by the strong influential position of the fish farming interests, supported by the local council, and partly by the absence of any interest articulating organisations. With a lack of formal protests from the environmental department at the County Governor's Office, local complaints in the case of wild salmon would hardly have been heard. The environmental department seems to act politically, saving formal protests for the worst cases, to enhance the chances for success where more fundamental interests are at stake.

The outcome of a local planning process like the one of Gildeskaal is to a great extent depending on the existing local problem structure and the present political situation. The blend of part-taking interests, being organised or not, links to the local politicians and so on seems to be working as in most political processes. The character of the local setting opens eventually up for intervening state sector agencies and their degree of influence as in our case. The bottom line is that coastal zone planning is a political process, where the outcomes are more reflected by the degree of politisation of affected interests than the character of the existing local ecological system. This fact serve to justify that ecological and environmental

concerns still have to be a matter for external actors, although the present planning system implies no guarantee for such concerns to be taken. The modest wild salmon concerns in our case give ample proof of that.

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